

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED in

Sam 95

St. THOMAS'S *Southwark*,

JANUARY 2, 1749.

For the Benefit of the

CHARITY-SCHOOL

In *Gravel Lane*, SOUTHWARK.

By EDWARD SANDERCOCK.

Published at the Request of the MANAGERS.



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JANUARY 1749

The Benefit of the

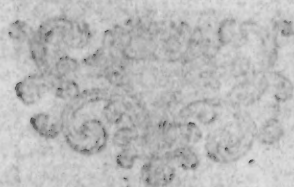
CHARITY SCHOOL

IN GREAT LANE, SOUTHWARK.

BY R. D. W. A. L. R. C. C. K.



Printed and Sold by J. D. W. A. L. R. C. C. K.



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TO THE
TREASURER
AND
MANAGERS
OF THE
Charity School
IN

GRAVEL-LANE, Southwark.

This SERMON,

Sincerely designed to promote its interest,
and the interest of RELIGION in general,

Preached and published at their Request,

Is now inscribed by

Their humble Servant,

E. SANDERCOCK.

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ACTS xi. 23.

Who when he came, and had seen the Grace of God, was glad; and exhorted them all, that with purpose of Heart they would cleave unto the Lord.



WHEN tidings of the great success, with which the gospel had been preached to the Gentiles at Antioch, had reached the Church at Jerusalem: Barnabas was sent thither, to be assisting to this good work; a man well qualified for it: a good man, one of sincere piety, a man of great benevolence and charity, as he had plainly shewn: *For having land he sold it; and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles Feet—to be employed for the relief and refreshment of the poor brethren:*

Acts iv.
36.

brethren :—one, who took pleasure in doing good, and communicating comfort to others. Wherefore *Barnabas* was the name given him, *which is by interpretation the Son of consolation* :—one, who was free from any remaining leaven of Jewish partiality and prejudice. And *when he came to Antioch*, and saw the grace of God, saw there the power and progress of the gospel, in consequence of God's blessing going with it ; he *was glad*.—He mingled counsel with his joy : *exhorting them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord*. He was a man full of the Holy Ghost,—and the extraordinary gifts and powers, with which he was replenished, commanded attention, and gave weight to all that was taught. He was full of Faith—so strongly impressed with a Persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, and having his Heart so thoroughly in subjection to it ; that he was zealous to spread it, where it was not ; and to preserve it, where it was. And by his means, many were added unto the Lord. ver. 24.

In order to confirm our minds, to render us constant in the profession and obedience of the Gospel, and to carry us on to greater degrees of christian perfection ; we shall do well to think of this counsel

fel in the text, and to put it in practice :
to take up resolutions, by God's assistance,
of *cleaving to him*.

Having spoken to the occasion of these
words, and observed to you the general in-
tention of them ; I shall now :

I. Explain more particularly the exhor-
tation contained in them.

II. Offer some motives and arguments
to inforce it.

III. Suggest two or three things for the
better and more successful direction of our
religious purposes. After which I shall
make some application of the discourse to
the circumstance of our having entered
upon a new year, and for the benefit of
that School, which now presents itself to
your view—a School, founded in charity,
supported by it, and (as I judge) deserv-
ing of it.

I. Let us enquire a little into the mean-
ing of the exhortation contained in the
text : *with purpose of heart to cleave unto
the Lord*.

It

It consists of two parts. And it will be proper to treat of each distinctly.

1. We are *exhorted to cleave unto the Lord.*

As if it had been said: "What difficulties, or discouragements, or dangers soever, you may meet with; be ye firm and immovable in the profession of the gospel, and persevere in the practice of all the duties of religion, with which the doctrine of Christ makes you perfectly acquainted, and which are in like manner most strictly commanded."

Such exhortation, as this of Barnabas, was peculiarly fit and necessary at the time, when it was given: for that was an age of sharp trials and sufferings. What dangers might threaten the Converts at Antioch, we know not. But it was right that they should be forewarned and prepared; that if they were called by God's providence, and according to the experience of many of their brethren; if they were called to honour him, and testify their sincerity by patience under persecution, for the cause of truth and righteousness; they might be found equal to that conflict,

conflict, and [by the help of God] might be enabled to triumph in the midst of enemies and dangers. But though persecution be left out of the question, whoever considers the state of human nature, how liable we are to be misled, how apt to grow unmindful of God, to be corrupted in principle and practice, to become careless and indifferent in what concerns religion, our souls, and another world; and whoever considers at the same time what is the state of the world about us; he will be sensible, that exhortations to constancy in religion, to a *patient continuance in well doing*; are not unseasonable, but are indeed very needful.

What it is, that God requires of us; what must be done, if we would serve and honour him; if we would please and be accepted of him: in that we are fully instructed by the Gospel. And when we live in a conscientious discharge of Christian duties, when we act upon Christian motives; when we love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength; when we fear above all things to offend him, when we take pleasure in devout approaches to him; when we are deeply humbled, and heartily grieved, under an apprehension of having in any instance been chargeable

B

with

with disobedience and ingratitude to him ; when we desire and determine so to act, as knowing ourselves in his presence, and that hereafter we shall appear at his tribunal ; when his word is the rule, and his glory the great end of our actions ; when we chuse him for our portion, and long for the enjoyment of him in heaven, as our supreme and everlasting happiness ; and when this is not only our present temper and behaviour, but we proceed and persevere in it : this it is to *cleave unto the Lord.*

2. Another part of the exhortation is with PURPOSE OF HEART—to *cleave unto the Lord* : that is with a serious and fixed resolution : that religion shall be our chief

Colos. i. 23. care and concern—that nothing shall *move* us from the hope, and obedience of the

Matt. xvi. 24. Gospel—that *we will deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Christ.*—That however religion may be neglected and despised in the world, we will not fail to manifest that regard and reverence of sentiment, language, and action, which corresponds with its certainty, reasonableness, and importance.

The force of resolution is seen in various instances of life.

To

To what labours and difficulties will men frequently and chearfully submit in the pursuit of riches, of honour, of power, and of fame? But what advantages do these yield, worthy to be compared with the blessed fruits and effects of true religion?—with its present peace and pleasure, and with the glories and transports of its future hopes and prospects? And why shall we not appear as active, as much in earnest, as resolved, in what pertains to our souls, and an eternal state; as others are, as perhaps we ourselves are, in what relates to this mortal body, this vain and transitory world? we walk upon the borders of the grave, [so subject are we to distempers and dangers, so frail and feeble is our frame.] If hitherto we have any of us gone on in a sinful course, *or halted*, as it were *between* 1 Kings two opinions, have been unsettled and in-xviii. 21. consistent; sometimes following God, at other times idolizing the world, and *serv-* Titus iii. 3. *ing diverse lusts and passions*; if upon examination we discover (as the best may do) many failings and defects: “ We do now
 “ O God! take up resolutions of devoting
 “ ourselves to thee: *we will keep our hearts* Prov. iv. 23.
 “ *with all diligence, we will obey that* Rom. vi. 17.
 “ *form of sound doctrine received from*
 “ *Christ, and his Apostles*; not be ashamed
 B 2 “ of

Mark
viii. 38.

“ of his name, of his word, and of his
“ person in a perverse and evil generation :
“ we will not knowingly offend thee, and
“ when we are conscious to ourselves of
“ having done this, then will we fall
“ down before thee with melting and con-
“ trite hearts, expressing our shame and
“ sorrow, intreating for pardon and mer-
“ cy from thee, resolving to do better,
“ and praying for spiritual help and strength
“ to carry these good purposes into exe-
“ cution.”

John
xvii. I.

When *Barnabas* put the Christians at *Antioch* upon the forming of such good purposes, he discovered his wisdom, his knowledge of men and of the world; as well as his piety, and charity. He had no intention, nor have his words any proper tendency, to recommend or countenance religious and monastic retirement. The exhortation in the text, was not designed, in this sense; *to take us out of the world; but to preserve us from the evil, whilst providence shall continue us in it.* Mankind were made for society. They are doing their duty, and nothing more: and are acting in a manner pleasing to God, not offensive; while they are honestly and diligently pursuing the business of the world, and by increase of property

perty in this manner, making a comfortable provision for themselves, and those who depend upon them. Industry in this case is both of private and public utility. And he who made the world, wills and approves whatsoever conduces to its general benefit and happiness. 'Tis very true, that the world is apt to engage men's thoughts and hearts in too great a degree: so that they love and *serve the creature* Rom. i. *more than the Creator*. And this according 25, to the Apostles doctrine, is one species, Colos. iii. and a very dangerous species of *idolatry*. 5.

As for the pleasures of the world, religion condemns not such as are innocent, for their kind or degree. But when those are pursued, which are evil in their nature; or when persons become fond to a degree of excess and extravagance of such as are innocent; to such a degree, as consists not with the preserving of a serious and devout temper of mind, with right attention to the duties of social and domestic life; with that oeconomy which is necessary to the interest of families, and essential to national virtue, and prosperity: such a course is highly criminal. And a fence against temptations of the world, that arise from its counsels and examples, from its frowns or its smiles, from its riches

or

or its honours, from its power or its pleasures; and I must not omit to add, from poverty of circumstances, which hath particular snares and dangers concomitant with it: let us follow that excellent advice, which is given in the text, by one of much wisdom and goodness, *one full of the Holy Ghost*; who delivered what was spoken under the illumination and direction of a principle vastly superier to all human wisdom, and who spoke from a spirit of sincere and ardent piety and charity.

It will not be so easy for the enemies of our souls, when we are armed and guarded with these sacred and solemn resolutions, to gain a victory or advantage over us. we shall be ready thus to reason with ourselves: “ Shall we, who
 “ have with the utmost seriousness and
 “ solemnity, devoted ourselves to God’s
 “ service;—shall we fly in the face of all
 “ our religious declarations and purposes?
 Pſal. lvi. “ Shall we forget, that *the vows of God*
 12. “ *are upon us*?—Treat with indifference
 “ and contempt the reasons of them, tho’
 “ we cannot deny these reasons?—Break
 “ through all obligation of duty and gratitude?—Fly from him who is our
 “ best friend; and being provoked will
 “ be our worst enemy?—Relinquish
 “ our chief good, and act most incon-
 “ sistently

“ fiftently with ourfelves, and our great-
 “ eft intereft? We abhor, we tremble at
 “ the thought of fuch a conduct. Ra-
 “ ther let us die martyrs, O God! O
 “ thou Lamb of God! to that religion
 “ we profefs; than pour fuch difhonour
 “ upon it, and draw down the divine
 “ vengeance upon us!”

Having now explained *the exhortation*,
 I go on in the

IId. Place to enforce a regard to it by
 fome motives and arguments. And the

1^{ft}. Thing I fhall mention is, the re-
 lation we bear to God as his creatures,
 formed with rational powers; and our ob-
 ligations to his goodness.

When we were young, our parents pro-
 bably dedicated us to God; who hath a
 natural and unchangeable right in all.
 But *that* was an act of *theirs*, and not
ours. We fhould therefore confirm and
 make it *our own*, [when capable by reason
 of age] by a deliberate, a perfonal, a de-
 termined furrender of ourfelves to him,
 as his fervants and difciples of his Son.
 Parental authority hath its foundation in
 nature, and is every where acknowledged,
 And

And while this is admitted, shall our obligations to God, the father of us all, be denied? God hath created us, and that gives him a right and claim to our best services: no other authority is comparable to this. And shall we not resolve to reverence him, to love him, and to live to him—who raised our bodies from the dust of the earth, who breathed into them the breath of life, and actuated them with intelligent and immortal souls? Parents expect, and with all the justice imaginable, honour and obedience from their children. And shall not this be paid to the parent of the universe? *A son honour-eth his father; and a servant his master: if I then be a father where is mine honour: and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts?*

Mal. vi.
1.

On the providence of God we continually depend: *He is thy life, and the length of thy Days.* And is not life under a wrong direction, when not regulated by his laws, and devoted to his fear? What is it, that upholds and protects us? No prudence or power of our own, but a kind and guardian-providence. How many have we known, whose bodies are now mouldering in the dust? How many are afflicted with sickness, pain, or other

Deut.
xxx. 20.

other calamities? Here *we* are, monuments of divine mercy. Methinks this should awaken our best dispositions, affections, and resolutions. How many blessings have we for which to be thankful? Every comfort and enjoyment of life, is an instance and effect of God's bounty and goodness, though from false and low conceptions, persons are too apt to resolve all into second and instrumental causes; which, independently of the first cause, are nothing. The health you enjoy, or have enjoyed, the use of your reason, the supply of your Wants, your success in the world, the happiness of being born in a protestant country; where plenty reigns, where the constitution of the government infringes not upon the freedom of the people, and where the administration of government is the real support and security of their rights and liberties—all these blessings we owe to God's great and unmerited goodness. And how base and inexcusable, undeserving of the privileges of society, are they; who will not acknowledge and adore that God, who is the fountain of all being and happiness; whose kindness flows without intermission, in so liberal as well as constant a manner? *Verbal* praise is right, and not to be neglected. However, *that* is nothing but words and sound, hollow and unacceptable,

ble, if not accompanied with a heart and life devoted to God.

Rom. vi. 13. Spiritual blessings are another, and a loud call to *yield ourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead.* The grand design of the Gospel was to make us holy, and to make us forever happy. For this was Christ born, for this he lived, for this he taught, and for this he died. What! does not the thought of such wonderful condescension and compassion operate upon our minds? Can no favours of providence, no displays of infinite wisdom and grace, affect our hearts, and engage us to God's service? God hath *redeemed* us by the humiliation and passion of his dear Son. And hence arises (if I may be allowed the expression) a new right of claim: *ye are not your own*, saith St. Paul, *ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are his.*

I Cor. vi. 23. ver. 19, 20.

2. God requires nothing of us, but what is most fit and reasonable.

Matt. xxii. 37, &c. We are taught to look upon *the love of God, as the first and great commandment—and the love of our neighbour, as the next.* And these are comprehensive of all piety, and social virtue. The gospel insists likewise

wise upon temperance and sobriety. And is it not very well known, what hurt men do themselves and others, by a contrary conduct! *To do justly, and love mercy, to* Micah vi. 8.

walk humbly with God; are the sum and substance of all practical religion. And what room is there to object to these? The obligation of them may, in part, be known from natural conscience, which is the oracle of God within us. But these are taught us by the Christian religion, with greater degrees of perfection—a scheme of religion, adapted by the plainness, and fulness of its precepts, and by the awakening importance of its motives, to spread abroad the knowledge and practice of virtue and piety; to make men wise, and good, and happy. “Thy service, O Lord! is my duty; and I am convinced, my honour and my interest: not inconsistent with liberty, but the best direction, and noblest refinement of it. *Thine I am, and thee will I* Acts xxvii. 23. *serve*: To Christ, and his gospel, will we have continual recourse: We will hearken to the voice of God speaking by him—we will copy after that example, which he hath set before us, and ever make the promises and threatnings of his word familiar to us; that these

“ may not fall short of their proper and
“ intended influence.”

3. Let us meditate sometimes on scripture-examples, and examples of good men whom we have known, or heard, or read of, remarkable for their piety, their patience, and their constancy.

What *hath been done, may be done again.* The hopes and fears of this world *have been* so far conquered, as to give place to conscience and duty; when they interfered. It *should* be so always. By God's grace resolve, that so it *shall be* in our case: *We are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses*—We have Prophets and Apostles, Saints and Martyrs; from whom we may
 Heb. xii. learn, and ought: *to lay aside every weight,*
 1. *and the sin that doth most easily beset us;*
and to run with patience the race, that is set before us. To this our Lord Jesus Christ calls us by what he hath done and suffered, as well as by what he hath taught: *who for the joy, that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.*—Consider Christians! *this great High-Priest of our profession.*—Consider them who in large numbers, with intrepid constancy,
 —4. and a visible pleasure and tranquility, *resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*—

Who

Who counted nothing dear, not their lives, Acts xx. that *so they might win Christ.*—And we ^{24.}

in like manner, if we consider, as we should, the nature of the Christian salvation; if we were in good earnest convinced and persuaded of its value, its greatness and excellency: we should count ^{Phil. iii. 8.} *all things but dung and dross,* in comparison of it; and reckon the sufferings of

this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory, that shall be revealed in ^{Rom. viii. 18.}

*us:—unawed by dangers, disheartened by no difficulties; uncorrupted by wicked passion, persuasion, and examples. “ Lord
“ Jesus! we look to thee. Draw us,
“ and we will run after thee. From the
“ contemplation of that Pattern, which
“ thou hast set before us; may we derive increasing strength and comfort!
“ And thus may we triumph in a complete victory over thine enemies, and
“ our own!”*

4. Another argument to purposes of constancy in the profession, and obedience of the gospel, may be drawn from its evidence and excellency.

All Schemes of human Philosophy were cold and comfortless, imperfect and ineffectual, when compared with the Christian

tian religion. How much inferior was the law of *Moses*, though a law of divine original? How glorious are the privileges and the hopes of the Gospel? How refined and perfect its laws? How powerful its motives? And as to the proofs of it—these are so plain and satisfying, that its authority cannot be called in question, but upon such principles; as seem to be quite inconsistent with all notions of a written and traditionary revelation. Think of the Miracles of his life, of his resurrection from the dead, of his visible ascent to heaven, of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, of the progress and perpetuity of his religion in the world, against all the prejudice and malice, the art and address, the power and philosophy, that were combined against it: and this according to what our Lord had himself predicted. Once more: think of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, in all its particulars, exactly answerable to what had been foretold and threatened many years before. With all this take the evidence of ancient prophecy—a long series of prophecies fulfilled. And after this, who can reasonably disbelieve, or doubt of the truth of Christianity? But I am speaking to such, as do publickly profess to believe upon these grounds of evidence. And let the continuance

tinuance of the same evidence and authority have this effect; to *stablish*, to *strengthen*, and *settle you*; in the profession of the gospel, and in the regular, chearful performance of every part of your Christian duty.

5. Let us often, and calmly, revolve in our minds the promises, and advantages which appertain to perseverance in faith, virtue, and piety; and on the other hand, those awful threatnings, which belong to a contrary temper and conduct: that these may restrain and ballance the power of evil affections, and the temptations of an evil world.

There are many *present* advantages, that do commonly attend a religious life. Sobriety is conducive to health, prevents those disorders, together with immature and untimely death, which many bring upon themselves, by their intemperate, extravagant, and wicked courses. Religion requires honesty and diligence in the management and transactions of business. And where these qualities are found, and maintained; I believe, it will not be denied, but that they are usually much more subservient to a man's worldly success and prosperity, than a different practice. Vir-
tue

Prov. iii.
16.

tue and goodness, kindness and charity; create friends, and conciliate respect and esteem. When *Solomon* therefore (who was well qualified to judge) is speaking of *wisdom*, (which is the title he gives to religion) he saith: *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.* When God, who knows and always does what is best, sees fit to afflict us with bodily disorders, with disappointments in the world, with loss of property of relations and friends; or any other kind and degree of trouble: Religion will minister to us support and comfort. It will stand by us, and refresh our Minds, when all other comforts fail; when nothing else can help and befriend us; that is at the hour of death. So that *godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

I Tim.
iv. 8.

We believe another world, where all good men shall be happy; and where the wicked shall be inconceivably miserable. We believe a day of judgment to come, in the which shall be dispensed after a public manner, with unutterable majesty and solemnity, with impartial and invariable rectitude and equity, [*according to the deeds done in the body*] the rewards and punishments

Rom. ii.
6.

ments, of which I am speaking. For though the joys or the sorrows, the transports or the terrours, of a soul *commence*, when it is seperated from the body; they are not *consummated*, till the trumpet shall have sounded, and the dead shall be raised, and all shall have received their final sentence from him, who is the judge both of quick and dead. I might here produce a great variety of texts of Scripture, that assert the truth and describe the awful proceedings of that day; which are so many arguments to shew the wisdom and necessity of adhering to God's service: so that he who will not be perswaded to a life of religion, must think himself to act a most inconsistent, rash, hazardous, mad part; unless he has brought himself really to believe (which is not easily done) that death puts an end to his existence, as well as the scene of his pleasures and enjoyments; that though so much distinguished from brute creatures, by the faculties of his nature, and raised so far above them; he is in nothing distinguished at death, but perishes forever, as they do; that all notions of an hereafter, of an heaven and an hell, are meer dreams and visions, fictions and fables. *Knowing the* ^{2 Cor. v.} *terroure of the Lord, we perswade men—* ^{11.} *perswade them, to what? not to destroy*
D them—

Ecclef. xii. 13, 14. Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9. themselves, to take care of their souls, to prepare for another world, to provide for eternity, *to live in the fear of God, and to keep his commandments; who will bring every work into judgment—who will render to them that by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil.*—How far the future judgment may be removed from us, as to time, we know not. But to a wise man the certainty of it will be a reason and motive so to live under its power, as if (for ought we could tell) it were near at hand. Death is never far off. And the grave admits no counsel, or working. The state of souls after death is immutable. Let us wisely and seriously consider our latter end, and resolve so to order our lives, and govern our tempers, as if these things, which are now the objects of our faith, were already, (what they will be) the objects of our senses.

I am now, as I proposed in the

III^d. Place, to suggest two or three things for the better direction and success of our good resolutions.

Let

Let these be formed without reserve of any thing, which we know to be evil; or exception to any part of our duty: *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point; he is guilty of all:* i. e. if he be a wilful and hardened offender; becauſe he thereby denies and affronts the authority of the lawgiver, in like manner as if he were to offend in many other inſtances.

In what we are ſenſible we have done amiſs, let us *immediately* reſolve to do ſo no more. Why will a ſinner preſume to put off his repentance? Life is ſo uncertain, that no prudent man, would venture any thing conſiderable (if it might be avoided) upon the continuance of it. And wilt thou venture thy ſoul, which once loſt is loſt beyond all recovery?

As long as we live, we ſhall not be free from trouble; or out of the reach of temptation. Nor is it poſſible to go on in a courſe of religion, without ſelf-denial, and encountering ſome difficulties. This we ſhould conſider, when we enter upon ſerious purpoſes of a holy life; that thus counting the coſt, having previous apprehenſions of what we may meet with;

we may be prepared, and not deterred, or disheartened, when we find that dangers and difficulties lie in our way.

One method of giving stability and efficacy to all good purposes, is, by renewing them upon all proper occasions. Attendance at the Lord's table is every Christian's duty. And when we are approaching to *that* it will be of great use, and a most fit season, to do what I am here recommending. What we *there* behold, what we commemorate, and what is done hath a tendency to give strength and vigor to these sacred resolutions. If we are ever serious, it must be at such a time. And when we are most serious, that time is of all others the fittest.

Matt.
xxvi. 41.

Lastly, let not vigilance and prayer be omitted. By prayer, as the channel, we are to receive such supplies, as our spiritual wants require, from the great Original of all goodness and happiness. And what the benefit is of circumspection and watchfulness, no one can be ignorant: *watch and pray*, said our Lord to his disciples, *that ye enter not into temptation.*

Rom. xi.
20.

From what we have heard, we should learn; even the best Christians may learn: *Not to be high minded, but fear.* None are

are out of danger; and least so, when they are least apprehensive and cautious. When *Barnabas* saw, what was the temper and behaviour of those at *Antioch*, he was glad. But yet he thought it expedient to warn them against declension: *Wherefore let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* 1 Cor. x: 12.

You, that are young, take this counsel: to dedicate yourselves to God in your early age. You are God's creatures and must be very miserable creatures, if you serve him not, and have no interest in his favour. Being arrived to an age, that renders you capable of the knowledge of your duty, be perswaded to enter forthwith upon the practice of it; before bad dispositions and habits have created an aversion, or indifference to it: *Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*---Re- Eccles. xii. 1.
member, that the eye of God is upon you. And will you dare to provoke him, who is able in a moment to destroy you? Will you live unmindful of him, who hath made you, and continually watches over you? Dont you judge it right, that you should honour and obey your earthly parents! Is it less fit and necessary, that you should reverence, and serve, and love with all your hearts, your Father which is in heaven?

ven? Early piety carries with it a peculiar grace and beauty, and is most acceptable in the sight of God; who observes,
 Jer. ii. 2, *and will remember the kindness of your youth.* Can you begin to do well too soon? Is it too early, to think of making God your friend? This is the only way to solid, and lasting peace and comfort. This will gladden the hearts of your pious relations and friends; and you will then be able *to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
 Rom. v. 8.

But why, may some of you say, is this address so particularly made to us? As we are young, we have time enough before us. And we will apply ourselves in good earnest to religion, when we are less capable of the business, or have less relish of the pleasures of the world. But consider: though you are young, are you not mortal? *Childhood and youth are vanity*—vain in this respect, that you are liable to death; as well as others of more advanced years. Dont render that age vain too in another respect, by making it a season of sin and pleasure. How many hath the last year carried off, as young and likely to continue as yourselves? This year may be the last to many of *you*. Enter upon it with those religious purposes of heart, which
 you

Eccles.
 xi. 10.

you would be ready to do; if you were certain this would be your case. Business and amusement, that destroy not, nor weaken, the seriousness, the piety, the sobriety of your minds and manners, are not forbidden. When you grow old (if you should live to do so) or when you come to die, whether young or old; will you not wish; that you had minded, and rightly improved such counsel, as is now given you? And there is this further reason of a special application to you, because upon the temper of the rising generation the cause and interest of religion in the world do very much depend.

Such as have reached to maturity of age, or to old age, cannot (one would think) need to be told; how inexcusable *they* are, and how dangerous their state: if *they* have not hitherto formed to themselves purposes of a virtuous and godly life, or have not kept to them; or have acted in a fluctuating, uncertain, inconsistent manner; sometimes ready to cry out; *what* Acts xvi. *shall we do to be saved?* and at other times 30. quite thoughtless and unconcerned. Shall such presume to go on? I have no warrant to say to any one of you in particular: *This year thou shalt die*—But this year Jer. you may die. And under a lively apprehension xxviii. 16.

hension of it resolve *now*, that you will go no longer on in a course of sin and folly; but that you will serve God, and live in a faithful discharge of your duty.

Some, no doubt, are gone into another world, who were present here the last year upon this occasion of charity. When they came to die, I am satisfied, it was no uneasiness to them, to look back upon what they had kindly contributed toward the maintenance of that School, which according to annual custom, here offers itself to your view and your charity. God be thanked! that we are spared. And spared for what end? that we may bring forth the fruits of piety, of righteousness, and charity. With gratitude, let us acknowledge the mercies of the year, that is gone. We have publick and national, as well as private mercies, for which to be thankful. We have healthful and plentiful seasons, when for our sins we might justly fear Gods judgments, such as pestilence and famine. He hath delivered us from the scourge of war, [for so upon many accounts may war be represented, when justifiable and necessary in its causes; and when attended with considerable successes.] And for all God's mercies, whether public or private. it becomes us to express our
gratitude

gratitude and praise. When we reflect on our spiritual as well as our temporal blessings ; when we commemorate the love of God in sending his Son into the world, to enlighten, and sanctify, and save us ; when by faith we behold the Son of God clothed with a mortal body : *in all points tempted* ^{Heb. iv.} *like as we are, but without sin*—^{15.} instructing the ignorant, leading sinners to repentance, opening the eyes of the blind, healing the sick, feeding the poor, causing the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and casting out demons, from those who were possessed ; when we behold him suffering all manner of indignity and cruelty, bleeding and expiring upon a cross—and from a design and desire of our salvation and happiness ; how does it warm our hearts with affection, and fill our mouths with praise ? And by the exercise of benevolence and compassion, not by verbal praise alone ; are we to shew forth our grateful sense of our obligations to God, and our Saviour.

What actions can be more acceptable to the father of mercies, and to our compassionate Redeemer ; than actions of kindness and friendship to our fellow-creatures ? Nature itself points out to us the fitness, the amiableness, the excellency of a bene-

E

volent

2 Cor.
viii. 5.

volent disposition. *St. Paul* recommends to the *Corinthians*, the charitable conduct of the *Macedonian* Converts: *Who first gave themselves unto the Lord*——and then gave with a liberal hand to the relief of their poor brethren. To represent any one as devoted to God, who hath no will to do good, and no delight in it, is a contradiction. We cannot be the children of God without an imitation of him, according to our ability and opportunity, in the extensive and unchangeable goodness of his nature. Charity is essential to all true religion. By that I mean not merely giving to another, but giving from a principle of love to God, and unfeigned goodwill towards men; which though it makes no difference as to the *Receiver*, makes a very material difference as to the *Giver*, since what comes not from these principles, partakes not of the true nature of charity. The Christians, for whom *St. Paul* was so earnest and eloquent an Advocate to the *Corinthians*, were at a distance of place and country from them. They, for whom I am desired, and am desirous, to excite your kind and continued regard, are here before you. What we ask for them is: that they may receive from your contribution and charity [and that under the direction of very proper

per Managers, who are content to give their trouble and their money to promote the welfare and interest of the School] I say, that from your piety and charity they may receive necessary and useful instruction—instruction in the knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of those things, that may render them more useful to Society in those services, for which they are designed; and *above* which they are not raised—such instructions as may by God's blessing sow in their hearts the seeds of religion and virtue, and so render them comfortable in this world, and happy in the next. But the account of this School having (as is usual) been communicated to me in writing, I beg leave to read it; and then to make a remark or two upon it. Thus, if any here present are not acquainted with it, they may be fully informed; and you will all (I trust in God) be ready to distribute to the necessity, and the benefit, of *these poor children*. Believe me (for I speak under the sanction of holy Scripture) that as far as what is given flows from the fountain of christian and genuine charity; *you shall* ^{Matt. xj} *in no wise lose your reward*.—What is ex-^{42.}pended in the pomp, the glitter, the pleasures, and the luxuries of the world, to please the eye, or regale the taste; what

is lavished away in the prodigality and profusion of vice and debauchery ; is lost forever : It affords no pleasure upon reflection ; and sometimes awakens the stings of conscience : as vice always doth, when men will think soberly and seriously of it. But what is given to the poor—designed to form the Children of such to the knowledge of religion, to sobriety of sentiments, dispositions, and manners ; to make them acquainted with a few things, which may be of use to them, and of use to others in those lower services, for which they are intended—that a man may always review with pleasure. *These, these children, cannot recompence you ; but you shall*

Lukexiv. *be recompensed at the resurrection of the*
14. *just.* And now I shall hope for your favourable attention, while I repeat a fair, and full account of

The STATE of the CHARITY-SCHOOL, in Gravel-lane Southwark, this second of January. 1748-9.

“ **T**HE foundation of this School,
“ was in the year 1687. in the
“ reign of King *James the second* ; when
“ a

“ a School was set up by one *Poulton*,
 “ a Jesuit; and public notice given, that
 “ he would instruct the Children of the
 “ Poor gratis; Upon which Mr. *Arthur*
 “ *Skallet*, Mr. *Samuel Warburton*, and
 “ Mr. *Ferdinando Holland*, (all members
 “ of this Church, in the Reverend Mr.
 “ *Nathaniel Vincent*’s time) laid the Foun-
 “ dation of this School, to avoid the
 “ dangerous consequences of a Popish
 “ School, and to provide for the instruc-
 “ tion of the poor in the Protestant way:
 “ The number of Scholars at first was
 “ forty, afterwards increased to fifty, and
 “ now to one hundred and fifty.

“ They are here taught to Read, Write,
 “ and Cypher, and are also instructed in
 “ the Assembly’s Catechism, and thereby
 “ qualified for the service of God and
 “ Man. It may be said to be the first
 “ School the Protestant Dissenters were
 “ concerned in. Here objects are receiv-
 “ ed without distinction of Parties, the
 “ general good being intended. It is
 “ situated in one of the poorest parts a-
 “ bout the City; and the Children of
 “ the poorest sort of Watermen, Fisher-
 “ men, and others, are here taught with-
 “ out any expence to their parents, and
 “ are

“ are furnished with Bibles, Testaments,
 “ Writing and Cyphering Books.

“ The Charges have been defrayed by
 “ the Gifts and Subscriptions of private
 “ Persons, with an Annual Collection in
 “ this Place, on this day, and one in the
 “ City, together with the kind remem-
 “ brance of the said School by some in
 “ their last Wills.”

This is the account. And is it not
 such a one, as ought to recommend it?

We remember and mention with honour, the names of those good and worthy men, who projected this School, and by whose piety, zeal, public spirit, and prudent application, it was effected. Such a School will be a benefit to the public at all times; and I pray God so to work upon the minds of all, to whom I am speaking; and of those, who shall descend from you: as that you may be disposed now and at all times, to give your assistance, and in proportion as God hath blessed you, to so good a work; and that the School may not want friends (when you are dead and gone) in those, who shall succeed you: that as it was begun in charity,
 hath

hath been upheld by it, for so many years, and hath increased and flourished: so from hence may be drawn continual supplies for its subsistence and encouragement.

The Jesuit was cunning, and knew what a harvest he was like to have; if from the consideration of their poverty, and the temptation of having their children taught at no charge, Protestant Parents might be induced to commit their children to him for education: While others *slept*, this insidious *enemy*, hoped Matt. xiii. 25. *to sow his tares*. But there were good Protestants, whose zeal and charity were awake. And by exerting themselves in a laudable manner upon this occasion, they laid the foundation of this School; and defeated the Jesuitical design of corrupting the minds of poor children with the false and dangerous principles of Popery, under the guise, and plausible appearance of charity.

It hath pleased God to preserve the School, which owed its rise to so good a principle, to this day; and likewise (as property hath encreased) to prosper it greatly. At first it consisted of no more than forty. But now, you hear, it is
risen

risen to an hundred and fifty. This School, as you will observe, and as many of you know, is situated in a part of the Town, where the families of the Poor are numerous : so that many children would probably go without any care taken of their instruction, if this care and provision, (of which I am speaking) were at an end : they would grow up in ignorance of [what it is a shame, that any should be ignorant in a Christian and a Protestant country] the principles of religion, of the Holy Scriptures, which contain the rule of our faith and practice : that rule, by which we shall be tried, when Christ appears to judge the world.

I know, it is sometimes matter of complaint and objection against *such* Schools, that what is taught sets children (in their own fancies and conceits at least) above what they are intended for, and by that means rather do harm than good. Tis true, they are taught in *This* to write a plain hand, and somewhat of the art of Cyphering. But this is not carried to any such degree, as is like to render them vain, and *above* the proper and reasonable duty of their places and services ; it is carried no farther than it is calculated and is likely

likely to increase the value and advantage of their services to the Public.

As you hear, you children! whom I am endeavouring to befriend, what is said by some against Charity-Schools; I take this opportunity to recommend to you a good, and modest, and tractable behaviour, while you continue *at* School, and when you go *from* it; that you may do some credit to the place, where you have been taught by the charity and bounty of others. And such behaviour will soon put such objections to silence. Nevertheless I think it fit to remark also, in answer to such pretences and prejudices as these; that if the instruction of poor children were a *much more common thing*, it would prevent for the most part any conceit or insolence upon account of it. Tis the *infrequency*, that is the temptation to *vanity*. And consequently this objection, which many have entertained, should rather incline us to promote, as much as may be, Charity-Schools under good regulation and management, than to discourage them.

The parents, and friends of the poor children before you, are desirous they should be taught in such manner, as to

be better qualified to serve both God and men : a very reasonable and commendable disposition and desire. The charge of this would, in their strait circumstances, be too heavy for them to bear. And must we not think it unkind and unchristian ; if they, who are able, should refuse [according to their ability] to minister some assistance by their liberality and munificence ? *I am persuaded better things of you.* I take for granted, that you are come hither, with more generous inclinations and designs. And I shall rejoice, if by any thing which you have now heard, the charity of your hearts is enlarged ; so that you determine to give [according to your capacity] with no sparing hand this day. 'Tis a real charity, for which I am pleading. And that to a disciple of Christ is argument sufficient—a charity, not at all restrained or directed by the little low spirit of a Party. Children are admitted without any distinction of Church or Dissenters ; and are only obliged (as far as parents and friends can be persuaded to take care of it) to attend the public worship in *some place*, without being confined to *any*, at the proper seasons for it.

Suppose, that these, and other such like children, were left without any instruction ;

tion ; were not accustomed to the orderly, and useful discipline of a School ; and no care were taken of their education—what might be expected to follow ? Why, that as they grew up in ignorance, and without restraint, they would grow up in vice too, and be both a disgrace and detriment to Society. As for the success of education in this, or any *other* instance, tis impossible to answer for it. And therefore it is not kind and candid, nor indeed just, to run down Charity-Schools in the gross ; because among those, who are bred or taught there ; some, nay many, behave ill afterward.

I might urge much more, than I have done, to engage your contributions at this time, to this well intended, and well conducted School. But I hope it is needless. And besides that, I have in point of time already presumed too much upon your patience. But *my heart was inditing a good matter*,—and being warmed with my subject, *my pen* become in some *Psal. xlv.* degree, *as that of a ready writer.* I.

I am no judge what any particular person ought to give, because that is to be directed and determined by his circumstances. We must leave that to God,

2 Cor.
ix. 7.

and every man's conscience. Only remember: *that God loveth the chearful giver.* And he, who gives *chearfully*, will, as we have reason to think, give also *generously*. What comes *grudgingly*, comes with no grace or beauty: it is rather *extorted*, than *given*; rather *a matter of covetousness*, than of *bounty*. Dont defer to another year, what ought to be done *now*. "Dont act," said a great Emperor "and Philosopher, *as if you had a thousand years to come. Death is at hand. Be good, while it is in your power* *."

Luke xii.
20.

Ecclef.
iii. 12.

To the rich Man, who was pleasing himself with reflections on his great plenty, his store beyond what he had room to receive, and the prospect of enjoying himself and his ease; to him it was said: *Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall all these things be?* — *I know*, said Solomon, *that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.* Which exactly agrees with what is said by one of the Philosophers: "*The use of money, is no-thing else but to give, i. e. for the benefit of others; or expend, i. e. for our own comfort and convenience* †."

* Marc. Anton. 4, --- 17.
L. 4. C. 1.

† Andron. Rhod.

Tho' beneficence to others do for the present take from ourselves; yet when under proper direction, so as to be an instance of genuine charity on the one hand, and not of extravagant folly on the other; it is the best oeconomy: for it brings God's blessing on our persons and affairs. And hence, it may be, success arises much oftener, than we are aware.

I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ—by the doctrine of the gospel, which is a doctrine of love and charity—by the example of Christ—by the belief of a day of universal, and awful, of impartial, and everlasting retribution; when particular enquiry shall be made what good we have done; and *when he shall* James ii. 13. *have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy*—by the consideration of the little time we have to live in the world, and the wisdom of improving it aright; by all these I beseech you, *that* I Tim. vi. 18, 19. *ye do good; that ye be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate: laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life*—Tho' I am far from thinking works of charity
to

to be meritorious, as is taught by the Church of *Rome*; and am sensible how many imperfections attend our best works; Heb. xiii. yet this I may say: *That with such sacrifices*, offered by a sincere heart, God is well pleased.

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